

SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA CONSORTIUM

March 9, 2005

The Honorable Gil Gutknecht
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gutknecht:

The Southeast Minnesota Consortium which consists of the eleven nursing homes, providing services to more than 900 seniors in Fillmore and Houston counties, supports H.R. 328, the "Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2005." We recognize the value of your sponsoring legislation that would lower prescription drug costs of American consumer by allowing the importation of drugs with appropriate safeguards. Your bill will ensure safety by mandating that the Food and Drug Administration approve drugs and manufacturing facilities before reimportation. Additionally, imported drugs must be packaged and shipped using approved counterfeit-resistant technologies.

Americans financially support the research and development of new drugs and then pay the highest prescription drugs prices in the world. This is not right. Older Americans and people with disabilities are particularly hard hit by the high costs of prescription drugs in the United States because they have more acute and chronic illnesses, thus they use more prescription drugs for treatment and are less likely to have insurance coverage.

The Southeast Minnesota Consortium is committed to enacting legislation that improves the quality of life for seniors, the disabled and all Americans. Passage of H.R. 328 will be a significant step to ensure that every American has better access to affordable prescription drugs.

Sincerely,



Julie Vettleson
Southeast Minnesota Consortium
Executive Committee Member